

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues on some issues that I think are very important to all Americans. First, I think we need to look at what has happened to try to help our senior citizens across the United States.

First, this 104th Congress, a very sensitive and caring, compassionate Congress, has already rolled back the Clinton tax on Social Security which had been established 2 years ago. We have also raised the earnings limits for seniors who are under 70 from \$11,280 to \$30,000 over the next 5 years. We have also passed legislation calling for a \$500 elder care tax credit, also a tax credit for the purchase of long-term care health insurance.

Now comes the issue of Medicare. We want to make sure in this Congress that we preserve, protect, and improve Medicare in this United States. We have heard from the trustees, a bipartisan group with three appointees from the Clinton administration, that in fact if we do nothing to help Medicare and let it stay the way it is, it will go bankrupt by the year 2002. A responsible House and Senate has to move forward to make sure we preserve, protect, and improve Medicare. Many of us are starting what we call Medicare preservation task forces. I just started one in my district in Montgomery County, PA. We have senior citizens and health care professionals and consumers of Medicare meeting for the purpose of discussing how we can make sure we in fact have Medicare become strong and remain vital.

The Republican proposal calls for the current figure of \$4,700 to grow to \$6,300 by the year 2002. That is a 45-percent increase. But we also need to make some other changes in the system to make sure it is in fact remaining strong. There is estimated as much as \$44 billion in waste, fraud, and abuse in the current Medicare and Medicaid systems. We need to make sure that the inspector general and other appropriate officials and, in Congress, oversight committees are making the changes so that that amount of waste is eliminated from Medicare and direct services do go to the people.

One of the other options we will be discussing is managed care and whether or not there is a more efficient and appropriate way to deliver the health care for those who may want that option while still retaining the fee-for-service option for health care for those on Medicare.

We need to have House and Senate Republicans and Democrats working together on a solution. We have seen that from the Clinton administration they have been AWOL, absent without leadership. There has been no proposal on how to save Medicare, when we know from the trustees and from the bipartisan task force that in fact Medicare needs to have appropriate changes made in the system to improve it, to

ensure that it is vital, and to make sure that it is financially stable.

I am looking forward to working across the aisle with fellow Members of the House to find the ways and means to control the costs, to eliminate bureaucracy, and to make sure we have more direct services to our senior citizens who deserve the best health care possible under our Medicare system and to make sure that in fact we work together for a solution before the year 2002 so that none of those senior citizens who want to have a Medicare Program that is there will miss the opportunity.

We will work together to help senior citizens to help improve Medicare, and to keep Social Security off the table because that is a program that has been vested by our seniors. It is a paid-in pension program. It is higher than an entitlement. It is a paid-in pension program that people deserve to have there for them, but we want to make sure that Medicare is strong and vital for them.

I look forward to working with Members of the House on both sides of the aisle.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 12 noon.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 12 noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GILMAN] at 12 noon.

PRAYER

The Reverend Randall C.K. Day, executive director, the Canterbury Cathedral Trust in America, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, You have given us this good land:

Make us alert to Your generosity and ready to do Your will.

Guard our unity as one people; build our acceptance of human diversity.

Bless our common life with unrelenting compassion, honorable work, sound learning, and stimulating arts.

Defend our freedoms. Save us from violence, discord, and every confusion; from egotism, arrogance, and every evil way.

Give wisdom, fairness, and integrity to those to whom we entrust the authority of government.

May there be peace with justice in our world, and may You be exalted among all nations.

In our prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness.

In the day of trouble may we always trust in You.

In Your mercy, O God, hear our prayer. Amend.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. OBEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HONORABLE LES ASPIN

(Mr. OBEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, as dean of the Wisconsin delegation, it is my sad duty to officially announce to the House something which most Members already know, that our friend and former colleague, Les Aspin, passed away at 7:55 Sunday night at Georgetown Hospital.

His official biography will note that he was born July 21, 1938. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University, his master's in economics from Oxford University, and his Ph.D. in economics from MIT. He served as a staff assistant to U.S. Senator William Proxmire, and as a staff assistant to Walter Heller, the Chairman of the President's Council on Economic Advisers.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968. He taught economics at Marquette University before being elected to Congress in 1970. He served in Congress for 22 years, until 1992, when President Clinton appointed him as Secretary of Defense. When he resigned his congressional seat to become Secretary of Defense, he was, as Members know, the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, and he was a darned good one. That is his official biography.

Mr. Speaker, let me say on a more informal note, as a friend, that Wisconsin has lost one of the most significant and effective human beings to ever serve our State, and the United States has lost one of the most decent and concerned citizens and leaders it has ever had.

In this time of cynicism about government and about politics and about politicians, I think it appropriate to note that Les Aspin literally worked his heart out to make this a better country and a safer world. He was totally dedicated, absolutely and totally

dedicated, to the ideal of public service. Anyone who knew him knew that he put public service ahead of personal life. He gave it everything he had, and he is now gone.

Mr. NEUMANN and I will announce at a later date when special orders will be held for Les, but on behalf of the Aspin family and his friends and staff, I want to make certain that Members understand what the information is regarding his funeral and memorial services.

Visitation hours will be held on Thursday, May 25, at the Schmidt-Bartelt Funeral Home at 10280 North Port Washington Road in Mequon, WI. Family and friends are invited to attend from 1 to 4 p.m. The public is invited to attend from 6 to 9 p.m.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, May 26, at 10 a.m. at Gesu Church, Marquette University, in Milwaukee. I have been asked to say that the family would very much welcome any Members who might like to attend those services.

At this point, as I understand it, transportation arrangements have not yet exactly been finalized, but it is expected that a plane will be provided by the Pentagon for a significant number of Members. If Members are interested in attending, please call my office and we will try to help facilitate that.

A memorial service will be held in Washington, DC, probably in the Capitol, around June 7. That is not exactly tied down, but we expect it to be on that date. Details will be made available as soon as possible. The family advises that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Les Aspin's name to one of the following charities: Country-side Humane Society, Racine, WI, Wisconsin Public Radio, or Georgetown Cardiology Research Fund, care of Dr. David Pearle, Georgetown University Medical Center.

Written expressions of sympathy to family and friends may be sent in care of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, room 340, Old Executive Office Building, the White House, Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, with the Speaker's deference on time, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] who, as we all know, is now occupying the seat once held by our good friend, Les Aspin.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, it is with much sadness that my wife and I received the news of Les Aspin's condition, and then later, of his death. Everyone who served in this body while Les was here understands the legacy he has left here in Washington. His unflinching commitment to the defense of this Nation is legendary, but today, very briefly I would like to make a few comments about the legacy he has left in Wisconsin, where I am fortunate enough to serve the district Les Aspin represented for 22 years.

Les was born in 1938, in the city of Milwaukee. In 1956 he graduated from Shorewood High School. In 1960, he graduated summa cum laude from Yale

University. In 1962, he received his master's from Oxford, and in 1965, his Ph.D. from MIT.

He was originally elected to Wisconsin's First District in 1970. He spend the next 22 years working on behalf of his constituents, with a tireless effort that is still a standard my office works to meet. Les was a professor, but he had the ability to relate to people. He was brilliant, but he was not arrogant.

Serving his constituents and his Nation was his life's passion. Keeping this Nation safe and free for our children and our grandchildren in his legacy. He will be remembered and honored by all he served.

On this very sad occasion of his passing, let us pause and reflect on Les Aspin, a man dedicated to public service and committed to keeping this Nation free. He will be sorely missed by all.

Mr. OBEY. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, and I yield to the gentleman from Milwaukee, WI [Mr. BARRETT].

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to Les Aspin. Those of us who have the tremendous honor of serving in this great institution sometimes fail to see the giants that serve among us. Certainly Les Aspin was a giant who served among us.

I am proud to say that he was born in Milwaukee and graduated from Shorewood High School, and he was a man who was clearly a leader, not only of the people of the State of Wisconsin, of the district that he represented in the southeastern part of Wisconsin, but of this entire Nation.

He was a man, as Mr. OBEY indicated, who gave his heart, literally, to this country. He poured hours after hours after hours into trying to grapple with the important issues we face as a Nation, and he did it because he loved this country. He was truly a public servant who cared about the people in the State of Wisconsin, and cared about the people in this great country.

It is rare that we see people in this institution who work as hard as Les Aspin did. He gave hour after hour for the people that he loved. However, in doing so, he was always able to retain his touch of the common man. As much as he accomplished academically and through the higher ranks of government in this country, he never lost the ability to relate to people on a day-to-day level. To me he will always be Les, the fellow who would put his arm around you, smile and joke, and ask how things were going. He was a man who cared about you as an individual and cared about people as people.

In this morning's paper there was a short paragraph that described probably the best the way we can think of Les, as we remember him.

He loved high-powered debates with intellectuals, but he never put on airs. He could talk to farmers and mechanics as easily as the Presidents and potentates. It is no wonder the voters of southeastern Wisconsin

kept Aspin in Congress for 22 years. They knew a good man when they say him. They, and all Americans, have lost someone special.

FOREIGN AID

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, the folks back home on my central coast of California understand the need to balance our budget. What they do not understand is how the United States can trim waste inside our borders, but continue to send money to foreign countries that do not support our Republic.

The American Overseas Interests Act begins as an interesting debate over our spending priorities. It will begin to make foreign aid less costly, less intrusive, and most importantly, smaller, by eliminating three foreign aid bureaucracies, and saving taxpayers \$21 billion over the next 7 years.

If there is one thing I have learned, we do not reward those who work against us. Yet, that is exactly what we are doing as a country. No more. To those countries that vote against the United States in the United Nations, support terrorist countries, or spy on the United States, they will not receive money from hardworking American taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, as we downsize the Federal bureaucracy and strive toward a balanced Federal budget in the year 2002, all areas of spending must be examined. This includes foreign aid.

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

(Mr. BALDACCI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I received a poignant letter recently from a woman in Maine. She goes to college, relying on financial assistance to do so. She is also raising a 4-year-old son, whose father has a restraining order against him and does not contribute financially. She works nights as a waitress to pay the family's bills.

She writes:

Some might say I do not need an education, since I'm managing to stay off public assistance, but there are more issues involved here than that. If I have to continue working in the evening once Isaiah is in school, I will not be there to help him with his homework or talk with him about any problems he may be having.

She continues:

I truly believe that education for more than just the wealthy is what will make our country the great nation we all want it to be. To deny even the hope of a better life to our nation's young people can only lead us all into disaster and despair. * * * Through accessible education, we can lift up all of our people, not just the fortunate few.

Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better myself. Our majority colleagues should reevaluate their priorities, and